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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 29th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. PETRESKI (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued)

Draft resolution on preventive action and intensification of the struggle against malaria in developing countries, particularly in Africa (A/C.2/50/L.10)

1. Mr. CABACTULAN (Philippines), introducing draft resolution A/C.2/50/L.10 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the international community should continue its efforts to eliminate the threat posed by malaria, particularly for the peoples of developing countries, including African countries, and drew attention to the conclusions adopted in that regard and the various measures taken to that end.

AGENDA ITEM 100: RENEWAL OF THE DIALOGUE ON STRENGTHENING INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION FOR DEVELOPMENT THROUGH PARTNERSHIP (continued)

Draft resolution on renewal of the dialogue on strengthening international economic cooperation for development through partnership (A/C.2/50/L.11)

2. Mr. CABACTULAN (Philippines), introducing draft resolution A/C.2/50/L.11 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and also on behalf of Colombia, representing the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, said that the deepening interdependence among countries and the increasing globalization of economic issues were new phenomena, and that it is essential to understand the impact they had, particularly on developing countries which often found themselves marginalized.

AGENDA ITEM 97: OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/50/113 and Add.1, A/50/254-S/1995/501, A/50/345, A/50/410, A/50/425-S/1995/787, A/50/475 and A/50/518)

(a) TRIENNIAL POLICY REVIEW OF OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM (continued) (A/50/202-E/1995/76 and Add.1-3)

3. Mr. COUTTS (World Food Programme) said that like other United Nations bodies the World Food Programme (WFP) had undertaken a certain number of reforms relating to policy, operations and resources in order to implement the relevant elements of General Assembly resolution 47/199.

4. The new mandate of WFP put it in the front line of the attack against hunger and poverty world wide. It also recognized the role played by women in tackling food insecurity at the household level and the need for broad-based participation. Interventions against hunger should make the connections between emergency relief and development; WFP should also, in that context, work in close collaboration with national and international partners. One way in which such collaboration was focused was through the elaboration of country programmes, which were a key tool for achieving greater impact at national level and encouraging greater interaction between WFP and its national partners in defining strategic priorities.

5. To carry out its mandate WFP must be backed by assured resource levels; that issue needed to be addressed along with those of transparency and accountability. A working group on long-term financing of WFP activities had made major progress in addressing those issues. A further major reform involved WFP's governance; its new Executive Board would meet for the first time in January 1996.

6. With regard to the links between emergencies and development, the first problem to be resolved was that of hunger, which stood in the way of both economic and human development. A few figures provided eloquent testimony to the importance of WFP in that regard: in 1993 its budget was in excess of $1.5 billion, or more than 15 per cent of the total resources of the United Nations system, and in the first half of 1995 it had delivered emergency food assistance to over 11 million people at a cost of $700 million, in collaboration with the High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations Children's Fund, among others. Food aid was a major resource of the United Nations system. Its special potentials and constraints should therefore be taken into account when discussing coordination, and it should be integrated with other resources in strategy development. In assisting the hungry poor WFP was motivated not only by economic rates of return but also by social considerations and it sought to develop relevant methodologies to integrate the two.

7. With regard to the operational effectiveness of WFP, he said that its interventions in developing countries were nationally executed. Its relationships with government counterparts were generally excellent, allowing it to develop strategies that often included elements of training and national capacity-building. It was also dedicated to closer coordination in the field at an administrative level; in order to reduce field office support costs it was also fully committed to strengthening the resident coordinator system.

8. Mr. NAMAKANDO (Zambia), speaking on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), said that the current triennial review of operational activities came at a time when development had assumed a high priority for the countries of SADC, which would therefore require more assistance from the United Nations system. It was regrettable that political commitment to the development agenda was waning and that the resources pledged continued their downward trend.

9. The Economic and Social Council had played an important role in overseeing the measures taken by the United Nations system to implement the resolutions pertaining to the triennial review. Since it had a comparative advantage over other bodies in the social and economic fields, it should be natural to expect new initiatives and greater dynamism to emerge from its deliberations. It should also facilitate the exchange of experiences from one agency to another in a timely and coordinated fashion.

10. With regard to the resident coordinator system, a wider participation by other agencies that were members of the Joint Consultative Group on Policy should be further encouraged and a careful analysis made of the priority needs of each country. The use of thematic coordinating groups could perhaps solve the problem. Agencies participating in the system should also share the financial burden of operating it. SADC commended the United Nations Development

Programme (UNDP) for having increased the resources allocated to the resident coordinator system for the next programming cycle. The system should recognize that the different mandates of the various participating agencies might impinge on their participation.

11. Country strategy notes were very important in enhancing the effectiveness of country programmes. In countries where they were still being worked on, the United Nations development system should continue to rely on existing national public investment programmes. With regard to regional strategy notes, the idea needed to be further developed with a view to establishing its usefulness, especially in the framework of inter-country programmes. It would be inappropriate to use country strategy notes as a basis, since they applied to the priority needs of individual countries.

12. The programme approach must be implemented with caution, bearing in mind that, in some cases, the project approach might still be the most appropriate modality. The definition of the programme approach needed refining since it varied from agency to agency. In that regard, SADC welcomed the efforts of the Consultative Committee for Programme and Operational Questions and was convinced that the reservations made by certain specialized agencies should be looked into.

13. It was unfortunate that little progress had been made on elaborating a common manual, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 47/199. He would like to see a speedy conclusion of that important work and a simplification and rationalization of United Nations procedures and practices.

14. National execution was essential because it encouraged the use of national resources, technologies and capacities. It must, nevertheless, be accompanied by a strengthening of national capacities, especially in the area of economic management, in particular in the least developed countries. Even after national execution had become the norm, the United Nations development system would still need to provide support. In addition, that idea needed to be defined more clearly because it was subject to varying interpretations by funds, programmes, and specialized agencies.

15. It was essential to simplify and harmonize the rules and procedures followed by the various agencies: the current diversity of approaches was hindering cooperation between Governments and the United Nations development system. Simplification and harmonization implied in particular decentralization and delegation of authority. The Bretton Woods institutions should also be a part of that process.

16. There had been a continued decline in the resources allocated to operational activities; that could only slow the pace and lessen the impact of the reforms called for in General Assembly resolution 47/199. It was unfortunate that some donor countries preferred to increase their contribution to non-core resources at the expense of central resources; the latter were the source of funding for most development activities. There was a need for a new financing system and a number of proposals in that regard were worthy of consideration.

17. Mr. KHAN LEGHARI (Pakistan) said that although it could not endorse all the substantive points made by the Secretary-General in his report (A/50/202-E/1995/76 and Add.1-3), his delegation considered it to be a useful starting point for negotiations on the future of operational activities.

18. The triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities came at a time when resources were declining sharply and the efficiency of United Nations development agencies was being called into question. Those two issues were closely tied to each other: when resources were no longer sufficient to achieve predetermined objectives and when, as was currently the case, funds were increasingly being earmarked for non-core activities, efficiency became an illusion. At the same time, many donor countries were reiterating that they could not increase funding until a marked increase in efficiency was demonstrated. The result was a classic catch-22 situation.

19. It would have made sense to withhold funds from United Nations agencies if they had remained indifferent to calls for greater efficiency. However, that was not the case: many successful reforms had been accomplished and new measures were constantly being taken, all in that direction. In fact, in some countries, there were voices calling for an end to United Nations development activities; for them, the question of reform appeared to be merely a pretext.

20. To remedy the situation, action was needed simultaneously on two fronts - the political level and the operational level. It was important to recognize that security was no longer defined as it had been in the cold war era: security was currently threatened by socio-economic problems - massive migrations, global epidemics and environmental degradation - which could only be resolved in the interest of all countries by multilateral action. At the same time, it was important to demonstrate that operational activities had a concrete impact on the life of the target populations; to do so, convincing evaluation procedures and methods had to be established. The impact of United Nations system activities ought to be evaluated in relation to the overall development objectives of each country. To be strictly impartial, the evaluation should be carried out by independent experts.

21. The above considerations showed how important it was to arrive at a consensus with regard to increasing resources on a predictable, continuous and assured basis, as stipulated in General Assembly resolution 47/199. In that connection his delegation endorsed the suggestion made by Algeria that the developed countries should commit themselves to multi-year negotiated pledges and that other ways to improve funding should be explored.

22. Other aspects of operational activities needed improvement. There was, for instance, a need to define more clearly the responsibilities of the executive boards of the funds and programmes in the United Nations system to ensure that they did not overlap with those of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. In addition, those boards must determine and make known the impact of budgetary cuts and post reductions on the efficiency of the funds and programmes.

23. Coordination should be examined more thoroughly, bearing in mind that it was neither an end in itself nor always appropriate. In the field, it would be

useful to set up teams to coordinate such themes as poverty elimination, population and health. Field representatives should also ensure that they coordinated with existing Government structures, without imposing their own coordination mechanisms on Governments.

24. While it was useful to consider collaboration with the Bretton Woods institutions, care should be taken to ensure that United Nations agencies remained within their mandate, in particular with regard to the principles of universality and neutrality. United Nations assistance could not, under any circumstances, be linked to conditionality.

25. Finally, the delivery of assistance was dependent on the quality of the staff and, in particular, the leadership provided by the resident coordinator. One possibility would be to expand the pool from which coordinators were drawn; in their context a discussion could be initiated on the possibility of having a highly trained cadre of development experts from which the resident coordinators could be drawn.

26. Mr. SYARGEEU (Belarus) said that his delegation endorsed the new orientations of the United Nations with a view to, inter alia, promoting long-term development, reforming administrative structures in the public sector and safeguarding human rights.

27. Belarus was in favour of strengthening coordination in the area of technical assistance between the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions and endorsed the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General (A/50/202) that were aimed at enhancing that cooperation. Moreover, an active dialogue should be established between Governments and financial institutions in order to harmonize national strategies with World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) policies for operational activities at the country level.

28. His Government welcomed the recent decision of the Economic and Social Council requesting United Nations funds and programmes to take into account the specific needs of the economies in transition. The situation of Belarus was especially troubling; in fact, its GNP per capita had declined by one third between 1992 and 1994 and, according to World Bank criteria, Belarus had joined the category of countries with below average incomes. Life expectancy and the birth rate had also dropped.

29. In that connection, he noted that the continued expansion of country programmes to cover States with economies in transition would promote their participation in the international system of economic and technical cooperation. In that regard, he recalled that the first United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) country programme for Belarus had been approved and was closely coordinated with programmes established by the Government to overcome its economic problems; that long-term programme was aimed at developing the country's internal capacities to achieve greater self-reliance.

30. He welcomed the dynamic measures adopted by the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) aimed at restructuring the organization's activities and its intention to employ a renewed strategy for the

execution of its activities in the region of Eastern Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the Baltic countries and to develop its activities in Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine.

31. With regard to the question of national representation in the recruiting of international civil servants, his Government hoped that, as a founder member of the United Nations, UNICEF and UNDP, it would be represented in the secretariats of the latter two organizations, since none of its specialists had ever been represented there. It was to be hoped that the matter would be given constructive consideration soon.

32. In the light of the financial difficulties the Organization faced, his delegation supported the budget strategy of the United Nations funds and programmes, which might help to promote greater effectiveness and rationalize their efforts. It welcomed steps to eliminate duplication, reduce administrative costs, accelerate decentralization, strengthen the resident coordinator system and give greater importance to accountability and the monitoring and evaluation of programmes.

33. The participation of national staff in project execution should be emphasized. The training and use of such staff would provide advantages to beneficiary countries and also to organizations by enabling them to reduce the number of their own specialists. In that connection, he endorsed the view of the European Union on the need to improve the system for recruiting resident coordinators and to provide training to all staff at the country level. There should be a common representation at the country level for United Nations funds and programmes, with strategies and programmes of action that took into account the specific interests of States.

34. It was regrettable that certain restrictions, such as the lack of an adequate information system concerning resource allocation and the monitoring of programme execution, were impeding the restructuring of operational activities.

35. His Government endorsed recommendations 21 and 22 of the report of the Secretary-General, and had high hopes of the broader application of modalities for national execution of projects and programmes financed by the United Nations system. It was vital to improve the training of personnel in the field and harmonize the efforts of all partners, increase transparency with regard to the selection of the executing agency and simplify the procedures for the financing of technical services.

36. It was important to share the positive experience acquired within the framework of effective cooperation with the United Nations system through interregional technical cooperation projects; in that regard he noted the interesting experience of a project currently being carried out by the regions of Eastern Europe, the CIS and Latin America. The United Nations should encourage such initiatives.

37. With regard to the Chernobyl disaster, it was to be hoped that the coordination of United Nations funds and programmes in the field would be a priority of the UNDP resident coordinator in Minsk.

38. Mr. PANOV (Bulgaria), noting with satisfaction the progress achieved in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 47/199, said that much remained to be done in a number of areas. In that regard, coordination was essential, and there were several ways to strengthen it. First, the Economic and Social Council should play a more decisive role both in coordination and setting policy for operational activities. The resident coordinator system should be improved; the country strategy note was an instrument that would make it possible to strengthen that system. On the other hand, the proposed regional strategy note required further study.

39. The financing of operational activities had given rise to many questions, and it was difficult not to be alarmed by the declining resources; his delegation therefore appreciated the willingness of European Union member States to continue consultations on the matter. In the face of those difficulties, it was essential that United Nations funds and programmes revise their activities in order to achieve optimum results which would encourage donor countries to maintain their financial commitments.

40. Since the adoption by the UNDP Executive Board of its milestone decision 94/14, UNDP had been able to focus its activities on sustainable human development, as witnessed by the preparation of reports on that topic for 22 countries of Eastern Europe and the CIS. Decision 95/23 also represented a turning point, since it gave greater flexibility in the assignment of development funds for achieving improved performance in all categories of countries.

41. With regard to economies in transition, steps had been taken to allow them to increase their share in core resources and to provide bonuses to some countries which had just gained independence. Moreover, the former Regional Directorate for Europe and the CIS countries had become a Regional Bureau. It appeared, therefore, that after a period of hesitation, UNDP had decided to take into account the economic and social realities of those countries and was now assisting them in the preparation of development plans and programmes and the mobilization of resources. In that connection, his delegation was looking forward to the mid-term review of the country programme for Bulgaria.

42. Among other aspects of operational activities that his delegation considered to be a priority were monitoring, evaluation and financial accountability. It also attached particular importance to coordination with the Bretton Woods institutions, to humanitarian assistance and to emergency relief.

43. In conclusion, he stressed that the profound political and economic changes that had occurred in recent years had confirmed that peace, economic growth, environmental protection, social justice and democracy were all closely interdependent. His delegation welcomed the decisions and resolution adopted in support of countries with considerable economic problems resulting from their strict implementation of sanctions imposed by the Security Council on neighbouring States.

44. Mrs. GOMANOVSKA (Ukraine) said that she was pleased to note the expansion of operational activities for development in countries in transition, as well as the strengthening of the role of UNDP and UNICEF in that process. In order to

increase the effectiveness of operational activities, it was essential to enhance coordination at the policy-making, inter-organization and country levels.

45. Her delegation welcomed the direction taken by the debate on operational activities in the Economic and Social Council. There was a need to encourage the adoption of innovative approaches with respect to the Council's work as the main intergovernmental coordinating body for activities in the economic and social fields. The Committee should give due regard to the recommendations on that matter contained in the Secretary-General's report. It was important to take into account the Council's strategic role with respect to country-level activities.

46. She noted with satisfaction the contribution of the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ) of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) to the implementation of General Assembly resolution 47/199. In addition, she emphasized the need to harmonize the efforts of ACC members in carrying out operational activities.

47. It was also important to strengthen the resident coordinator system, which played a central role in enhancing cooperation by the United Nations at the country level. Indeed, it was essential that the resident coordinators should enjoy the support of the entire United Nations development system. She welcomed, in that respect, the decision by UNDP to allocate 1.7 per cent of its resources to support the resident coordinator system. Ukraine was in favour of expanding the country strategy note process, which facilitated the coordination of activities at the country level.

48. The effectiveness of cooperation in the field of development was ever more closely linked to the strengthening of national capacities. Her delegation supported the approach whereby the provision of assistance for capacity-building was seen as an indispensable element of development activities. At the same time, national authorities should play a decisive role in planning, coordinating and monitoring the technical assistance process.

49. Lastly, her delegation considered the evaluation, monitoring and follow-up processes to be priority areas in the implementation of operational activities policies.

50. Mr. SPETH (Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)) said that UNDP operational activities were country-driven and country-owned. UNDP would continue to take as its guiding principle the letter and spirit of the mandates entrusted to it by the intergovernmental bodies, the task of the Executive Board being to review country programmes. National execution would continue to be based, wherever possible, on national capacities, which would be reinforced, when Governments so requested.

51. Coordination was not an end in itself, but a means of enhancing the effectiveness of operational activities and strengthening their impact on people-centred development. That was the aim of the resident coordinator system, usefulness of which would be enhanced by the country strategy note. The decision to draft a note was left entirely at the discretion of national

authorities, but it was encouraging to note that more and more countries were choosing to do so and were requesting that the terms of the notes should be refined. The country strategy note was also a valuable tool for mobilizing resources, as well as for promoting collaboration with the Bretton Woods institutions. Under no circumstances, however, were notes reviewed by the Executive Board, to which they were transmitted purely for reference.

52. Careful note had been taken of the comments made by various delegations regarding evaluation, monitoring, reporting and accountability. The Inter-Agency Working Group on Monitoring and Evaluation had created three subgroups on performance measurement, capacity-building for evaluation in programme countries and building accountability to clients. Their work would assist the United Nations agencies who would be involved in the follow-up to the resolution to be adopted on operational activities.

53. The harmonization and simplification of rules and procedures were concerns shared by all the executive heads involved in the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP) who based their consideration of current and future measures on the work of the JCGP groups dealing with those topics.

54. With regard to funding, the Secretary-General had recently observed that the total amount of official development assistance had slipped to its lowest level since 1973. Some claimed that only free trade and direct foreign investment could resolve the problems of the developing countries. That was one of the most pernicious myths. In fact, 75 per cent of direct foreign investment went to fewer than a dozen countries and only 6 per cent went to Africa. Thus, there was no correlation between the needs of developing countries and investment. Moreover the agreements concluded at the Uruguay talks would provide only limited benefits for those countries. Official development assistance was essential, therefore, to ensure successful development cooperation. It was indispensable for building capacities, mitigating the harsh effects of structural adjustment programmes and helping developing countries to take advantage of direct foreign investment and trade liberalization. Donor countries must therefore provide the necessary resources on a stable, regular and reliable basis.

55. Mrs. SADIK (Executive Director of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA)) said that the detailed and constructive discussions on item 97 had shown that, while in some areas there had been significant steps forward, in others the slow pace of progress must be investigated in the same spirit of reflection and willingness to respond to criticism which had guided all those involved in the drafting of the report on the triennial review.

56. It would be wrong to conclude, however, that the United Nations system had done nothing to enhance the coherence and coordination of its operational activities: there was a wealth of examples to the contrary.

57. CCPOQ had adopted a statement of the functioning of the resident coordinator system and guidelines on the involvement of non-field-represented agencies to be implemented in the near future. Briefing of resident coordinators had been improved, in particular through joint trading courses. The selection process was wider and more transparent. The resident

coordinators' annual reports, now more regular and substantive, would, in the future, be reviewed in the light of the various organizations' concerns, and the coordinators had greater power in that all programmes required their final clearance. One of the areas in which their role could be enhanced was that of sectoral and thematic reviews involving bodies dealing with a specific question. Finally, their accountability should be reaffirmed.

58. The common interpretation of the programme approach and the guiding principles for a monitoring and evaluation methodology were already taking shape: various bodies had launched thematic evaluations, a joint database was being created and UNDP had established common monitoring principles.

59. The country strategy note, which remained optional, was still in its initial stage, but, whenever a country decided to prepare a note, all the relevant bodies would participate together. Substantial progress had been made with the harmonization of programming cycles, which was nearing completion, and in national execution, the joint framework defined by CCPOQ was now widely applied. It was true that not every country was able to assume complete responsibility for execution, but the aim was to achieve that goal gradually by systematically providing technical assistance activities which would give countries the necessary skills.

60. The area of decentralization presented more problems, since it was difficult to ensure coordination in the field between agencies that were accountable to different authorities. Some progress had been made, however, in the sharing of premises and services.

61. The key role of recipient countries in programme coordination and their national sovereignty in that area were fully recognized, as was the priority that must be given to the strengthening of national capacities and to the use of technologies and local capacities. There was also unanimous agreement on the need for predictable, assured and stable resources.

62. The new resolution to be adopted on the subject must nevertheless be realistic and durable. The idea of a common manual was therefore perhaps too ambitious, since common principles were required in any event to spare recipient countries the heavy administrative burden of preparing reports. An inventory should first be taken of the areas in which it would be useful to have common practices and those in which the same set of rules should be applied. Towards that end, all the rules and procedures already in force should be reviewed. For example, resident coordinators should have common rules governing salary payments, the amount of daily subsistence allowance, travel allowances and other staff-related rules.

63. With regard to the programming process, it was necessary to develop common databases, make use of existing situational analyses, apply the same methods for studying the impact of operational activities and hold consultations at each critical phase of the programming process, given that agencies would participate in the various mechanisms only in accordance with their respective mandates and in so far as their technical competence allowed. Common principles should also be agreed upon for follow-up activities, which would permit, inter alia, an annual choice of the sector to be evaluated, thereby helping the Economic and

Social Council to more effectively coordinate all operational activities. Such a body of principles, procedures and common processes would permit the elaboration of a more coherent strategy tailored to the needs of each country's development plans and programmes. UNFPA would actively participate in those ongoing efforts to achieve greater coherence, effectiveness and impact.

64. Mr. DESAI (Under-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development) said that the report of the Secretary-General (A/50/202), which had served as the basis for the constructive debate on agenda item 97, was the fruit of a major effort of inter-agency collaboration and the result of a comprehensive opinion survey of all the partners concerned, recipient countries, donor countries and resident coordinators.

65. The connecting thread running through all the recommendations contained in the report was a concern to strengthen the national management of development and external assistance and to ensure greater harmony between the operational activities of the United Nations and national priorities and programmes. In fact, the strengthening of national capacities was at the heart of the debate on coordination and coherence.

66. Among the issues which, in the view of certain delegations, had not been adequately addressed in the report was the need to make more extensive use of technologies, expertise and other indigenous resources whose optimal use could help to reduce the cost of assistance and to make activities more relevant to local needs. Secondly, some delegations were of the view that the report did not give sufficient prominence to the role played by the General Assembly, although it contained recommendations on another aspect of the intergovernmental process, that of the relations between the Economic and Social Council and the executive boards of funds. In that connection, it should be recalled that it was already fully recognized that the General Assembly was the only organ competent to define the mandate of operational activities through the resolutions which it adopted, as could be seen from the fact that the debate on agenda item 97 had taken place in the Second Committee. With regard to the regional strategy note, it was clear that at the current stage the proposal was just an idea and that more in-depth study was required. Lastly, on the question of the delegation of powers, section F of the annex to the report showed that practices varied considerably from one country to another. Recommendations 1 to 4 concerning the relationship between the Economic and Social Council and the executive boards could define a framework within which a more uniform approach could be developed in that area.

67. Also welcome were the favourable views expressed on two important points which required even greater efforts, i.e., the elaboration of a common manual of procedures applicable to all agencies of the United Nations and evaluation and follow-up activities. In contrast, with regard to the country strategy note, certain delegations expressed concern that United Nations organs intruded on the prerogatives of countries. To eliminate any ambiguity in that respect, it was important to remember that the note was voluntary in nature, that it belonged exclusively to recipient countries and not to the United Nations agencies and that its principal objective, in addition to coordination, was to ensure that assistance was demand-driven and that it reflected the needs and requirements of

the development programmes, priorities and plans of each country, as General Assembly resolution 47/199 clearly provided.

68. Specific recommendations that were easy to implement should therefore be elaborated with due regard for the fact that the coordination exercise as a whole was doomed to failure unless the issue of resources was tackled.

69. Mr. VAHER (United Nations Children's Fund) expressed satisfaction at delegations' favourable reaction to the report of the Secretary-General (A/50/202), which was an excellent example of cooperation within the United Nations system in a complex field. He noted that a comprehensive range of elements that went into General Assembly resolution 47/199 remained intact, thereby creating an enabling environment for the implementation of the difficult multi-year changes that were considered to be indispensable. While there were certainly areas in which progress was still needed, in so far as there was near unanimity on many of them, he hoped that the resolution to be adopted at the current session would be clear, specific and unambiguous, which would facilitate its implementation and permit its results to be more easily evaluated.

70. General agreement was noted in such areas as national execution and capacity-building. Similarly, most delegations were of the view that United Nations agencies should aim for more effectiveness and closer integration and should maintain both the multilateral and the national character of programmes while at the same time developing a better system of funding.

71. Among the concerns most frequently mentioned were the need to simplify and harmonize the procedures used by the system in the areas of financial rules, accounting, personnel and procurement; the rules no longer reflected current conditions, especially in the financial field, owing to exchange rate fluctuations. Some delegations had also pointed to the need to extend the partnerships to the Bretton Woods institutions and other regional and international financial institutions, civil society and the private sector, and to the importance of more intensive follow-up and evaluation in cooperation with government representatives.

72. On the other hand, opinions were more diverse in other areas, whether they were related to general issues such as the global restructuring of the modalities of programme delivery or to specific questions such as the relationship with the governments of recipient countries, the role of resident coordinators, the use of the country strategy note and the question of funding. In those areas also, clear, durable and unambiguous language must be elaborated.

73. On the question of the single review committee, which was the subject of recommendation 10 of the report of the Secretary-General, UNICEF wished to respect the two main principles that governed its activities, namely, the fact that it operated on the basis of country programmes and that each beneficiary government was fully responsible for the elaboration of its programme. In addition, since UNICEF usually involved a wide range of partners in each stage of programme formulation, it did not wish to jeopardize that network of exchanges by adding another layer of bureaucratic process that might slow the preparation of country programmes.

74. On the question of evaluation, the secretariat of UNICEF approved recommendation 22 that the following triennial policy review should include an evaluation of the impact of operational activities. However, guidelines should not be laid down prematurely based on narrow experience. Emphasis should be placed rather on establishing a balance sheet of the successes and failures encountered in the course of the implementation of a given recommendation, using, where necessary, pilot projects which could provide useful experience for the elaboration of appropriate guidelines.

AGENDA ITEM 102: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT (continued)

Draft resolution on the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (A/C.2/50/L.9)

75. Mr. CABACTULAN (Philippines) introduced draft resolution A/C.2/50/L.9 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, as well as of Colombia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.